



February 2nd, 2022

Senator James Dill
Chair of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
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Representative Margaret O'Neil
Co-Chair of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
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Dear Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and esteemed members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry:

This letter is sent in regard to the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine's February 8th briefing to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

I believe that the committee will be pleased to learn about recent changes in the governing structure of both the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine and of the Wild Blueberry Association of North America – US that are relevant to the concerns voiced by the Washington County Delegation in February of 2020.

In addition, I am attaching for your reference our 2021 Annual Report. The Annual Report was developed this year to help educate the wild blueberry industry about our work, and to solicit industry input to and involvement in the Commission, its committees, and working groups.

Relevant Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine updates

- Current Commission composition is 5 grower-representatives and 4 processor-representatives with one empty processor-representative seat.
- The Commission has conditionally adopted bylaws to govern its functions, pending review by a qualified attorney. Under these conditionally approved bylaws, the offices of the chair and vice-chair of the Commission will be representative so that if the chair is a processor-representative, the vice chair is a grower-representative, and visa-versa. This will help to ensure that



Commission leadership is representative of Commission membership.

- The Commission has requested that, along with the funding that we allocate to the Wild Blueberry Association of North America – US (WBANA-US) each year to support the development of promotional opportunities, both parties sign a “Wild Blueberry Promotion, Advertising, and Health Research Agreement” that lays out objectives, key performance indicators, and a plan for updating the Commission on progress that WBANA-US has made towards those objectives.
- The Commission continues to make bold strides in improving industry communications.
 - We released the first ever Wild Blueberry Commission annual report, intended for an audience of Maine wild blueberry growers and businesses (attached).
 - We published a website to help make information about our work more available and accessible to industry taxpayers (www.wildblueberrycommissionofmaine.org).
 - The Commission’s 2022 plan of work includes a series of grower listening sessions to solicit greater industry input in the Commission’s activities and priorities. Input will be compiled and presented to the Commission in the fall of 2022 to be incorporated into our 2-year cyclical strategic planning and priority setting process.

Relevant Wild Blueberry Association of North America – US (WBANA-US) updates:

- WBANA-US amended their bylaws in December of 2021. Previously the bylaws required the makeup of the board of directors to have one more processor than grower. The amended bylaws now read that “The Board shall be made up of an equal number of Grower Members and Processor Members...”
- WBANA-US is currently creating a new promotional campaign to better connect Maine (and the Maine barrens) to the wild blueberry story by carrying out a place-based promotional campaign to educate consumers about wild blueberries from Maine. The Maine story will become one of the central attributes of the wild blueberry brand promoted by WBANA-US.

Thank you for your attention to this industry. I look forward to briefing you on the recent activities of the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine on February 8th, 2022.

Sincerely,



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cc: Members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Senator Nathan Libby, Senate Chair of the Government Oversight Committee



Representative Genevieve McDonald, House Chair of the Government Oversight Committee
Lucia Nixon, Director of the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability
Senator Marianne Moore
Representative William Tuell
Representative Anne Perry
Representative Kathy Javner
Representative Robert Alley
Representative Rena Newell
The Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine

encl. Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine 2021 Annual Report

